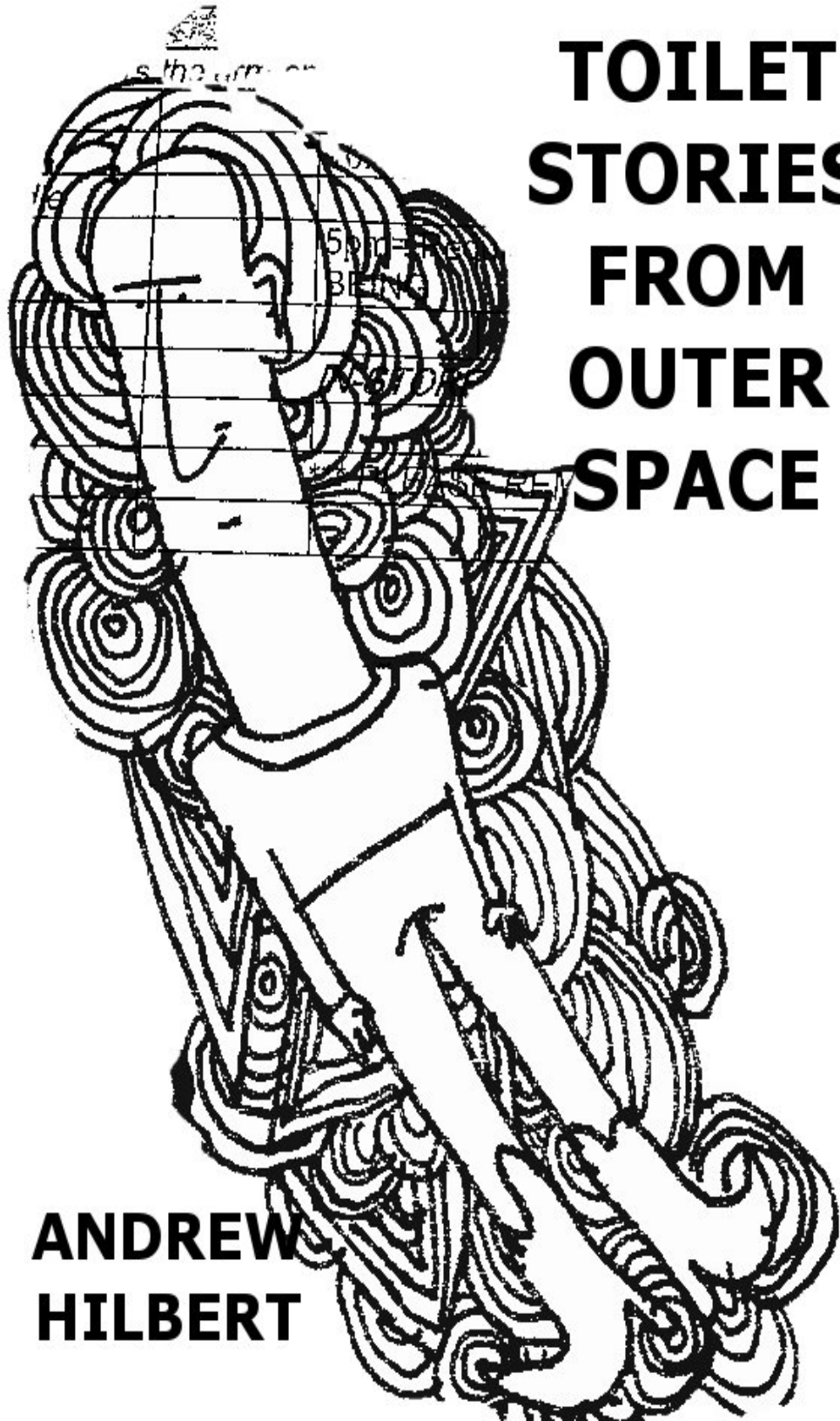


TOILET STORIES FROM OUTER SPACE

**ANDREW
HILBERT**



Toilet Stories From Outer Space

by

Andrew Hilbert

2013

*Many of these stories were originally published in some form in these
journals, blogs, etc.:*

*Out of the Gutter Online, The Flash Fiction Offensive, The Pigpenn,
Bank Heavy Press, Severine, Horror Novel Reviews, and the Slagdrop.*

Cover art by Andrew Hilbert



www.slagdrop.com

Table of Contents

The Miraculous Life of Kim Jong-il
According to a Texas Cowboy Who Just Shot the Last
American Polar Bear in San Antonio

7

The Motel Painting

12

The Body

15

Two Cowboys Settle a Dispute

20

My Talking Dog

23

WINKY

29

Margaret and the Infestation

31

THE MIRACULOUS LIFE OF KIM JONG-IL ACCORDING TO A TEXAS COWBOY WHO JUST SHOT THE LAST AMERICAN POLAR BEAR IN SAN ANTONIO

Me and Kim Jong-Il are celestial brothers. We have the same space projector out there shining our lives down to earth. Most people don't share life projectors with significant folk. I share mine with Kim Jong-Il.

We shared, rather. He's dead now. It was on the news. You've seen him. Stylish fella. About my height.

Anyways, I'm connected to thousands and thousands of things. Plants, animals, people... all on one projector. We all have our own light bulbs but we share a motherboard. Born on nearly the same damn day. You never really know about all this stuff until you're connected with someone important. Just today I learned I was connected to a San Antonio polar bear. Last one, too.

I started to get to figuring me and Kim Jong-Il were on the same plane when I started having dreams in Korean. I don't even speak Korean. I'd hardly heard it in my entire life. Soon I realized, though, I was just looking through his eyes as he walked through life. I only *thought* initially I was dreaming. Boy could eat, I tell you.

One time I was dreaming of a train ride and I was Kim Jong and all I could do was speak English. My advisors looked at me like I was crazy but I kept saying, "I'm hungry for a cheeseburger. The microwaveable kind you get at Valero." Except I was him, he was saying it, and I don't think they have too many Valeros in that part of the world.

There was Chinese men in suits and they spoke Chinese, which sounded like Greek to me, and was all suspicious. Then Kim Jong snapped out of it and spoke Korean again and one of my advisors told me that the Chinese were upset thinking I was drinking too much imported bourbon. I tell you what, I woke up in the morning and drove myself to Valero and got me a burger.

I have a vivid memory of when I was born, a few days afterward. Earliest memory I have. This is me speaking as myself now, y'hear? I was in my grandma's arms and I looked up to her and I felt warmth and that was it. But I had my first dream that day too. I dreamed I was born

on Baekdu Mountain and a lightning bolt struck the top and a unicorn parted the clouds, swept me up, and rode me to Pyongyang. In that dream I was Korean. It was only much later I realized I was Kim Jong-Il because that's his damn birth story. Same damn one they tell on their TVs out there!

What's more though, perk yer ears up for this one. Today I ran into a polar bear. A polar bear in San Antone. He was poking around my backyard as I was sitting on the stoop spittin' tobacco. Just about shit my pants, too. It's all connected so keep that part of the story in yer head.

My dad was a big man, King of the Cowboys. Spoke perfect Spanish and branded cattle with his bare hands. He always wanted me to be one like him too. When I was hanging around the kitchen with Ma, he'd yell and beat her until she couldn't cry anymore. I started feeling real guilty, so I learned to rope a horse and ride one. Learned to shoot guns at moving targets pretending they were Indians. Didn't do a damn thing for Ma, though. She still got hit no matter how tough I pretended to be.

One night I dreamt in Korean again. My dad was powerful, ass kissers everywhere. He beat the Americans, he kicked back the South Koreans, he had power like very few had. I was his boy, watching westerns on TV, subtitled in Korean specially for me. Dad came in drunk, yelling at me and telling me I wasn't worthy of the Korean revolution. Then he grabs my mom by the arm and punches her square in the face.

"We're raising a fat American faggot!" he said. "It's your fault, you dumb American bitch!"

The beatings continued in my dreams and when I was awake. Nothing we could do, me and Kim Jong, but try to please our dads, I guess. Nothing ever worked either. They were always angry about something.

I grew older and so did he. He never really quit his dreams to become a great American cowboy and I never really quit my dreams to become a respected chef. They were only dreams though because our fathers were too crazy about keeping their sons tough enough for the world. They didn't know a damn thing about life projectors. Me and Kim Jong did though.

Once, he got an education in Malta and learned how to speak pretty passable English, he stopped his studies to talk to me.

"I'm jealous," he said. "I know you're there great cowboy of Central Texas. I see you all the time in my dreams."

I up and woke up real quick. It scared the shit out of me. I went to our kitchen and fried up some bacon.

"It's two in the fucking morning, Chisolm!" I heard my pa yell as he stumbled down the stairs. "Mary, it's too god damn early to be frying bacon!"

I left the stove on and ran outside to the open fields where the cows were.

I heard a big rumbling in the house. My ma wasn't home. She left.

"You fuckin' bitch!" I heard my dad yell and clang around breaking stuff. He didn't know the stove was still on and after a few minutes of cursing God, my mom, and his 'faggot son,' he went back to bed. I fell asleep on a pile of cow shit because it was too damn early to be cooking bacon and Kim Jong-Il was there again. He was drawing pictures of cowboys when he was supposed to be writing sentences in English.

I woke up to a flame. Our house was on fire. We were far off from any fire trucks and I had to watch it burn. I realized my pa probably slept through it and burned down with it. I never saw my ma again and I'd be lying if I told you I wasn't a little happy that I'd never see Pa again. The bulb on his board out in space had burned out.

For a while I stopped dreaming in Korean. Didn't see Kim Jong again until his dad died in 1994. Kim Jong was older, I was older, and we had filled into the positions our daddies saw for us nicely. He was leader of a nation and I was still wrangling cattle and sending sausages all over Texas.

Kim Jong-Il was in his palace bedroom as I dreamt. He watched old John Wayne movies and wore a cowboy hat. All the same, images of slack jawed cowboys were painted across North Korea to portray Americans as war hungry, inbred idiots. He didn't shed any tears for his pa, either. He must've known I was there with him because he tipped his cowboy hat at nobody in particular and smiled. He knew he had to be an actor for his people, for his daddy, God of North Korea.

I never was much of a golfer. I don't understand it. It's something the land developers do out here when they're raping fields to build condos

and plan to buy season tickets to the San Antonio Spurs. I never think about golf. I don't know a damn thing about it. One day, though, I fell asleep on this same stoop watching my boys throw dirt at each other and chase chickens around. I dreamed of Kim Jong on a big grassy field, hitting golf balls perfectly. He had a perfect game. Every shot was a hole in one. It was in their newspapers the next day.

I remember we Americans made fun of it like it was some kind of silly propaganda done by a nation who hasn't evolved past state propaganda and into the commercial kind. I was there, though. This guy could play golf and he played much better when he was drinking whiskey imported from China that was imported from Tennessee. He wore a cowboy hat but he took that off when the state media took pictures of him. That guy could smile. He had a good fake one. Me and him knew we weren't what we wanted to be. We were, though, exactly what everyone else expected us to be.

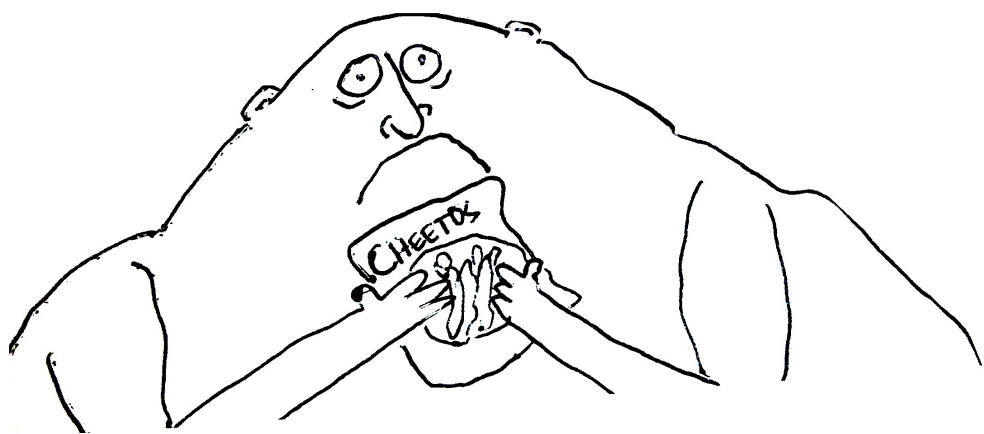
He was getting sick, like me now. I'm getting sick too. Years of smoking and chewing and baking in the sun is catching up with me. I dreamed a few days ago of him choking. The color faded and swirled in the dream. Lights flashed. It was like a bulb about to go out but struggling to stay on. I was there his last night on earth.

Just like today. The news played that a polar bear escaped from the San Antonio zoo. Probably tired of being locked up in a cage in 110 degree weather when he was supposed to be freezing his balls off. I don't blame him. Somehow he got out and into my yard.

My boys were playing, they were a little too close to the bear for my comfort. I called them in and once I was for certain they were safe, I went to the back and grabbed my shot gun. I walked up to the polar bear and he stared me in the face. There was a flash and suddenly I was staring at myself, at the other end of the shotgun. Confused as all hell, I stared and my mind was blank. I didn't understand bear thoughts as good as I could Korean thoughts. I was staring at myself, shaking and sweating, until the trigger pulled and there was a nanosecond of a light bulb flickering on and off until it finally went out.

The polar bear was dead and bleeding. We were all on the same projector and all the bulbs go out around the same time.

I haven't got long here. Just thought I'd tell you what I know about things and there it is.



THE MOTEL PAINTING

George lit up a cigarette and put his feet on the nightstand. He was wearing cargo shorts, gray socks, and Velcro strap sandals. He and his wife, Heather, were on a road trip through the southwest. Somewhere halfway between Santa Fe and Albuquerque, Heather got tired of driving and wanted to stop.

"I feel like I'm dead," she told George while he drove.

"Dead?" He asked. The highway was straight and narrow so he drove with his knees while he lit another cigarette.

"Yes, dead."

"I don't get it."

"I just feel like the scenery is looping and we're getting nowhere. That's what dead feels like to me."

George rolled his eyes but was willing to stop for a night. Twelve hours of driving was enough on any good day.

George blew smoke into the motel's air and looked around.

"Ain't so bad," he said. The wallpaper was curling and yellowed at the top, the popcorn ceiling looked like it was in the microwave too long and the carpet felt slimy even with sandals on. Heather sat at the edge of the bed and stared at the painting hanging behind and above the television. George was uncomfortable with her silence.

"That's a nice painting," he said, hoping to part the fog of silence.

"I don't get it," Heather said.

George didn't get it either. They were in the middle of the desert and they were both looking at a painting of a ball on the beach underneath the shade of an umbrella.

"We could turn on the TV," George said but Heather stared deeper into the painting. Her face was white paper. "We could turn on the TV," George repeated and waved his hand in front of Heather's face. Her eyes looked through his palm and she said nothing.

"I'm turning it on," he said. He kicked off his sandals and sat at the back of the bed. *Jeopardy!* Was on. "Honey," George said, "This is a good one. That computer is playing. Supposed to be real smart. You think you could move a little to the right?"

Heather did not move or respond in any way. She stared at the painting.

"Son of a bitch," George muttered and stuck the butt of his cigarette into the ashtray. "I'm leaving to get a Coke and when I'm back you better not be looking at that damn painting! It doesn't even make sense! We're in New Mexico!"

George left looking for a vending machine. He got headaches when he was pissed and Coke usually cured them. He went down the stairs and to the office after a few minutes of walking in circles and finding nothing.

Betty, blue makeup smeared under her eyes, thin mustache on her lip, looked up from her *Enquirer* when George walked in. She grunted.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Hi. Y'all have soda vending machines?"

"Really?" she asked and got up. Her back cracked in ten different places. "Leave the office, turn right at the second hall first chance you get, go underneath the sky bridge, turn left second chance you get and turn right immediately after that. Ol' Pokey'll be there sittin on a green lawn chair and smokin' a cigarette. Right acrost him is the vending machine."

"Coke?"

"Pepsi, sugar."

A Coke was what usually cured George's headache but in tight spots, Pepsi'd do. George's sphincter tightened up a bit at the annoyance, though.

"Thanks, Betty."

"Whatever," she said as she struggled to sit back down.

"Turn right second hall underneath bridge..." George told

himself when he exited. He followed the directions but it led him back to his own room.

“This doesn’t make any bit of sense,” George scratched his head. “I went underneath a sky bridge and never went up any stairs...” he tried to talk some reason into this conundrum. “I didn’t want a Pepsi anyway.” He walked back into the motel room.

Heather was still at the foot of the bed staring into the painting of a ball, underneath an umbrella, at the beach.

“Still with that fucking painting,” George said under his breath.

“I feel dead,” Heather said.

George lit up a cigarette and kicked off his gray socks.

“I wish I was,” George said.

THE BODY

There it was. Flies buzzed around it. There had to be a hundred of 'em. Flies, not dead bodies. Of dead bodies there was only one.

Traffic did not slow down the way it usually does at grisly scenes. Nope. It just kept speeding. But the body was there. I know cuz I saw it. I know cuz I poked it.

He wasn't a friend of mine or of anybody I'd recognized. This dead body had a suit on. A suit and tie. Nobody 'round here wears those. It's tacky.

"Smells like shit," Crazy Bob said, "That's why the flies swarm it. They think it's shit. You check his pockets?"

"I don't wanna touch it," I said.

"Well, shit! Poke him and make fer certain he's dead so he doesn't get all jumpy when I reach in his back pocket!"

"Ok, you gotta stick?"

"A stick!? There are sticks all over the god damn place! We're on

the side of the freeway!”

I looked around but there were no sticks.

“You think a beer can’ll work?” I asked him.

“Is it a tall can?”

“Nope,” I said with the empty Bud in my hand.

“If you wanna get that close to him. I hear dead rich people curse you with wealth if you poke them. You don’t want that, do you?”

“Wealth?” I asked.

“Money, you idiot. Just poke the motherfucker!”

I poked him in the shoulder with my finger. He didn’t move. The flies made my skin feel like millions of things were crawling all over it. I like that feeling.

“He’s as dead as flies on shit!” Crazy Bob’s hands dove into each of the body’s side pockets simultaneously. Crazy Bob pulled out an ink pen.

“What’s the California Redemption Value on this?” Crazy Bob

was holding the pen close to his eye. He sniffed it. "What the hell's the use of a pen!?" Crazy Bob threw it onto the freeway. Tires screeched but there was no accident. A pen ain't too much of a harm to the normal flow of things.

Crazy Bob turned the body over and reached into his back pocket. He pulled out the biggest wallet I'd ever seen.

"I think our nightmares are over!" Crazy Bob could barely lift it with one hand.

I ran toward him.

"Fifty-fifty?" I asked.

"Sixty-forty."

"Fifty five-forty five?"

"Sixty-forty."

"Ok."

Crazy Bob opened the wallet. No money in it, just a bunch of golden and silver credit cards. No one would believe me and Crazy Bob could legitimately get our hands on one of those. There were just some

lint balls and a receipt to a high class restaurant. He spent \$200 on two plates.

“That’s where all the money went, goddammit!” Crazy Bob yelled.

“That’s one heavy receipt.”

“Shut up! Shut the fuck up! How’re we gonna split this? Sixty-Forty. What’s sixty percent of a lint ball and an eyelash?”

“I’ll take the receipt,” I offered.

“What? So you can pretend that you spent \$200 on a meal? So you can be the King of Shit-town? No!” Crazy Bob waved his arms around, holding on to that damn wallet like it carried bars of gold.

“I just wanna look at it and imagine,” I said.

“Imagine what? Imagine what? You stupid damn idiot sonofa-bitch cock sucking wannabe moneyed snaggle ass! What’re you gonna do with the receipt? Use it as collateral to get shiny new spinny rims on your grocery cart?!”

“Fine, you take the receipt. You can have the whole damn thing.”

Crazy Bob threw the wallet into the freeway traffic. One of those platinum Visas must have had a real heavy balance on it or something because that wallet shattered the windshield on a Mercedes Benz and it went skidding across four lanes, getting smashed by cars less valuable in each lane. The flies'd be happy soon. The bodies were stacking up as far as I could tell. Lots of honkin' and hollerin'.

Sirens started blaring nearby. A fire truck came. Police cars came. Helicopters hovered over. The Mercedes driver was dead—I saw an officer poke him. A couple of officers were interviewing survivors and witnesses and all of 'em pointed at me and Crazy Bob. Crazy Bob smiled and waved at them.

“Look at it this way, Corker,” Crazy Bob put his arm around me. With his free arm he pointed across the sky, “Free meals, a place to sleep, and television.”

He paused a second and made sure I heard him take in a deep breath right before he said, “Jackpot.”

Two Cowboys Settle a Dispute

Kershaw liked Sally. Sally was Orel's woman. Kershaw and Orel were both cowboys.

One day, Orel caught wind of Sally looking outside a window wistfully whispering Kershaw's name while readjusting her panties.

"Sally!" Orel yelled, "Get the fuck outta that window and stop touching your panties. Whose name is it that you beckon, woman?"

Sally stared motionless, tears in her eyes, shivering, hands still down her panties.

Orel looked out the window and saw Kershaw greasing up his donkey.

"Shirtless show-off, no good, son of a monkey's uncle," Orel said under his breath as he spit his tobacco, put on his boots, buckled his belt, and grabbed his magnum.

"I'm going out there, Sally," he said, "and when I get back you better not have them god damned hands down your god damned undies!" He looked at her as she removed her hands from her undies. She stared faceless at him.

"And would it kill you to put some god damned beans on the kettle?!" Orel asked as he walked out.

"Just make fer certain you wash them god damned hands. They's all dirty with juice inspired by that no good donkey greasing son of a bitch!"

And with that Orel stomped out.

"Kershaw, stop fondling that fucking donkey and git yer ass over here!" Orel's Texan meanness came out when he was angry.

"Yes, Orel, what seems to be the issue betwixt us?"

"The issue is my lady is over there fondling her lady parts while yer out here greasing your ass!"

"Well, Orel, I can't help somebody else's wandering eyes..."

“grease yer goddamn donkey somewhere far away from my window!”

“Orel, we’re gunna have to settle this the old fashioned way,” Kershaw grabbed the gun in his gun holster and held it to the sky.

Orel pointed his to the sky, too.

“Alright you son of a bitch,” Orel said, “Whose gun glistens more in the sun?”

“Any idiot can see mine does!” Kershaw answered.

“Bullshit! Even yer goddamn donkey can see mine is more magnificent in the sun!”

“Donkey!” Kershaw pointed his gun at his donkey, “Whose is more magnificent? Mine or his?!”

The donkey turned away and farted.

Kershaw shot him dead.

“Any idiot can see that yer ass was just being honest!” Orel yelled. “You can’t shoot an honest ass!”

“Honest asses are born every day. I’m raising me a mean litter of ‘em!” said Kershaw.

Orel, with his left eye, spied Sally at the window watching the two have it out.

“What do you have to grease your donkeys near my window fer?” Orel asked.

“I can grease my donkey any damn where I please. I prefer a captive audience.”

This got Orel’s goat. Everyone knew that Orel was piss-shy at the trough whenever somebody else peed next to him.

“You know that’s unfair. We really should have stalls put into our piss troughs. I can’t pee when someone may be peering over my shoulder.”

“No one said nuthin’ ‘bout pissin’, you pussy,” Kershaw shot into the air and inhaled the gun smoke from his barrel. He tipped his hat to-

ward the window and winked at Sally. Sally's face was one of pure ecstasy.

Orel was raging jealous.

"Let's do paces!" Orel yelled.

"You're on."

Kershaw and Orel stood back to back and counted ten paces.

They turned at the exact same time, pulled the trigger at the exact same time, and hit the floor dead at the exact same time.

Sally burst out of the house screaming and in tears but with a hand down her panties.

The sheriff rode in at that moment.

"What seems to be the problem, missy?" the sheriff asked and spit out his chew.

"The men I love. They's dead!" she yelled.

"It happens out here, dolly," the sheriff said. He peered into her eyes, swollen from the tears. "Say, I've got some donkeys I need to grease tonight. What say you saddle up behind me, put your arms around my waist and we ride to them. I like doing things with an audience."

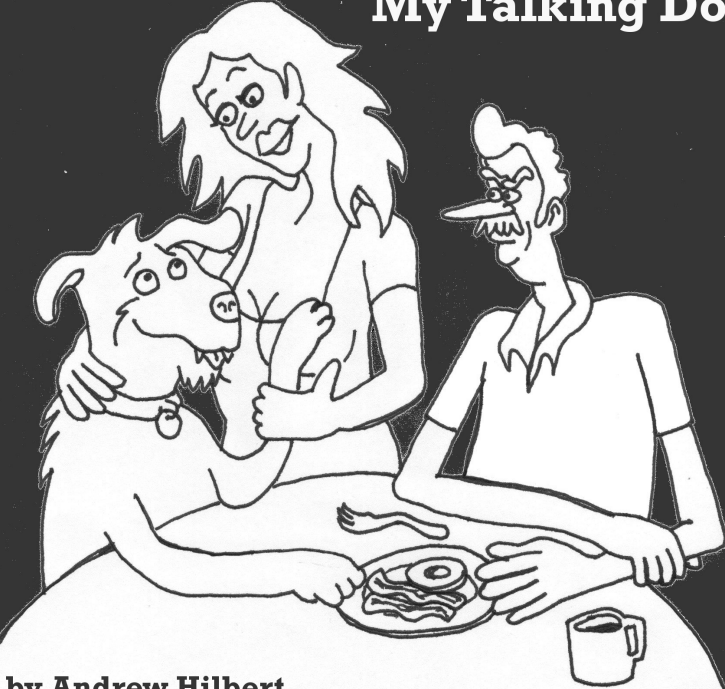
Sally's tears were dry by then. She hopped onto the horse behind the sheriff.

Time heals all wounds, she thought to herself as the sheriff struck his spur against his horse and they rode off.

"You sure are purty," the sheriff said.

Sally held onto the sheriff tightly with one hand and put the other down her undies.

My Talking Dog



by Andrew Hilbert
illustrated by Todd Mein

Fido was a good dog. He rarely barked or shat inside or bit anyone but one day, while I ate breakfast and read the paper and, while my wife slept in, Fido sat beside me.

“Who was that strange woman over yesterday, Bob?” he asked me. His tongue was out and he was panting like normal and looking up at me with dumb eyes that seemed perpetually incapable of proper grammar or complex thought.

“What?” I asked. I put the paper on the table and spit out my bagel.

“That strange woman who came home with you on your lunch break, who was she? She quickly undressed, you unzipped your pants and you took turns eating each other’s lower parts for lunch.”

“Shut up before Angela hears you!” I whacked him in the head with my paper. He whimpered and cowered away from me.

“Can I have some of your bacon?”

“Only if you promise never to speak of my lunch again.”

“What if Angela offers me more bacon?”

“Then don’t ask for any bacon and don’t say a goddamn thing.”

I could hear shuffling from our bedroom. Angela was waking up. Her footsteps down the stairs were slow and measured. She was probably still rubbing the sleep out of her eyes and walked slowly to avoid falling down.

She wrapped her arms around me from behind when she finally got down.

“Good morning, love,” she said to me, her eyes still adjusting to the reality of the work day.

“Good morning,” I answered with one eye straight ahead to my newspaper and another eye threatening euthanasia to Fido if he decided to show off his new found speaking abilities.

“Did you toast a bagel for me?” Angela asked with a kiss on my ear.

“Shit, I didn’t expect you to be up so early,” I said. “I’m sorry.”

“I heard you talking to someone and that’s what woke me up. It’s okay.”

Fido let out a little bark and I kicked him as hard as my cotton slipper could manage. He yelped and hobbled to his dog food bowl.

“Why does Fido look so sad?” Angela asked. On her way to the kitchen to toast her own bagel, she pet Fido and gave him kisses. His tail wagged wildly.

“I love you poochy-poo,” she said to him as he slobbered all over her. She walked into the kitchen.

“I like her better than you, asshole,” Fido whispered to me. “Give me more bacon or I’m talking.”

I grabbed a few strips of bacon and threw them on the floor.

“Arf!”

His tail wagged in delight and Angela took a seat next to me.

“You’re feeding him bacon?”

“Why not? The dog deserves bacon every now and then.”

“If he gets fat I’m blaming you!”

“Arf!”

Fido was sitting between us, staring at the bacon.

“Arf!”

I looked to Angela. Her eyes were daring me to give him more bacon.

“You’re going to spoil him,” she said.

Fido started growling.

“What’s gotten into him?” Angela asked.

I grabbed a few more strips of bacon and threw them at the far corner of the living room. Fido ran to the corner and chowed down.

“I can’t believe you’re giving him more. That much bacon isn’t even healthy for a human.”

“Well, whatever. I’m in a good mood.”

“He’s going to get sick!”

“Then he’ll learn the hard way, won’t you Fido?”

Fido’s ears perked up and he walked slowly to me. I could hear him growling. Angela got up to put her dish in the sink.

“Hard way, huh?” Fido taunted. “I know my limits. Give me more, you fuck.”

I grabbed for more but mid-clench Angela walked back in. She was angry.

“Bob!” she yelled, “That’s enough!”

Fido’s growling got louder and he started barking.

“You’re turning him into a monster! Listen to him!”

“Listen, lady! You’ll shut up if you knew what was good for you!” Fido barked back at her.

Angela’s face went flush. She didn’t know whether to be angry, confused, excited, or all three.

“What’d you say, Fido?” she asked.

“Arf!”

I grabbed the bacon and threw it to the far corner of the room again.

“Did Fido just talk?” Angela asked me.

“Your imagination. It’s acting up again. Are you off your depression meds?” I asked.

“Don’t blame this on me!” Angela got up and started crying. She was definitely off her meds.

“There was nothing to blame on anyone! I wasn’t blaming anything on you! I just asked a simple question.”

She threw her slippers at me.

“I know what you’re getting at! Everything’s in my head! All my questions about where you’ve been – the answer is always, ‘You’re just crazy, baby!’ Fuck you! Fido spoke. Are you off your deaf meds?!” she was wailing, red-faced, and violent.

“There are no deaf meds, honey. That makes no sense.”

“Ohhh – I’m the one not making sense as always! Of course I’m off my meds! I never needed them in the first place!”

Meanwhile, Fido’s tail was wagging like crazy and bruising my leg. His penis was hard like he was getting off on our fight. He lifted his paw to the table, pointing at the bacon.

“Give me the bacon,” he whispered.

“You fucking pervert!” I yelled as I threw the plate of bacon against the wall. He ran to the pile of broken porcelain and delicious pig and lapped it up.

“What’d you call me?!” Angela roared from the stove. “I have to cook more bacon because you didn’t have the heart to think about me! Some other bitch at work is always on your mind!”

“I didn’t say anything to you.”

“I heard you call me pervert!”

“Maybe you heard the dog!”

“Fuck you, Bob. Fuck you!” she walked out of the kitchen and threw the burning bacon grease at my face. Fido, having finished the last pile of bacon I made, jumped on me and began licking.

“Fuck you, Fido! I’m burning here!”

He put his two paws around my head and pushed my ear toward his mouth.

“Think about what you say,” he said.

Angela walked in the living room. Calmer than before she threw bacon grease at me. She was chewing on her own strip. The bacon must have calmed her down. I threw Fido off of me and ran toward the kitchen, knowing that my only tool for Fido’s silence was in there; Angela’s fresh pile of bacon.

As soon as I grabbed for it, Angela jumped on my back.

“You’re not taking any of my bacon!” she yelled and kicked and screamed.

I gave up.

“Fine,” I said and watched Fido as his interest shifted to Angela and her bacon.

“You’re the only thing that loves me,” she said as she pet him.

Fido went closer to her ear and I heard him say, “I’ll tell you a few of Bob’s secrets for some bacon.”

Angela fed him a strip.



WINKY

I lit a cigarette on my way home and rolled down the windows in my car. It was hot as hell outside and some folks were out doing chores. An older couple, man and wife, wore straw hats. The man was shirtless and the woman was wearing a bikini with her old skin sagging over the fabric.

I checked my rear view mirror and there in the backseat sat **1** and **1** the Sequel.

“Look at these idiots,” **1** said. “Outside doing chores, washing their cars, watering concrete as if it does any good. Wind will blow, dust will settle, and they’ll have to do it all over again. And if it rains they’ll have something to talk about over dinner while avoiding eye contact!”

“We never did finish our game of WINKY,” **1** the Sequel said.

“WINKY! WINKY! WINKY!” **1** looked like he was going to explode. “Can we pause them all now?”

“Yes, **1**. They are all paused.”

They both giggled for three seconds before getting out of the car and playing with the people that had paused. They were two weird motherfuckers. I followed.

“You see,” **1** the Sequel said to me as I exited, “These people, they do their chores. They water pavement, they wash their cars, they scrape bird shit off their windshields, they do all of this for what? They delay the inevitable doom? They delay nothing!”

She came to me and gave me a little kiss on the cheek.

“There is no mixture in their lives. This is what they do day in and day out. WINKY is a game to change things. Make them question how they got to where they are.”

1 the Sequel put the saggy lady in the bikini in a squatting position and fashioned her arms to have her hosing off her ass for some reason.

1 meanwhile fully unclothed the shirtless man and had him

tongue kissing the pizza man who happened to be in pause radius.

“Aren’t you worried about ruining people’s lives?” I asked.

“Lives?” **1** could barely say it without laughs escaping his nostrils.

“Lives do not have existence in a state that can be ruined. There is no ruining of a life. There is simply a change of circumstance. This pizza boy will seriously reexamine every stray erection for the rest of his life. Gramps here will travel to Thailand and become a sex tourist. Granny will merely have a very clean ass,” **1** the Sequel said everything with the mechanical assurance of a sausage grinder. “Or, something completely different. The only sure thing I said is that Bikini Tits here will have a clean ass. That’s a fact. There’s fluoride in that water.”

“Ve drive away now and let zee events unfold for themselves.”

I pulled away very slowly as the effects of the pause wore off on them. In my rearview mirror the confused pizza man pulled his lips away from the man. I watched the strange grin on his wife’s face as she realized what her husband was doing. She walked over to him and grabbed his penis and licked his ear. I watched as the pizza man fell to the ground with no regard for the pizza. He had no idea what was going on, he had no idea how he started the embrace he found himself in.

“You see how his middle finger anxiously creeps up to his wife’s asshole? It’s like he appreciates not having his middle finger completely caked in fecal matter when pleasing his wife anally,” **1** the Sequel whispered into my ear. “You know it’s harder and harder to please a woman with age. One man, one dick, one set of hands, one set of feet, one face... all get tiresome. A woman would much rather focus on hobbies. We just rolled the dice and their lives are rearranged. Realignment. What we do is neither good nor bad. We have no control. We just experiment.”

“Zee hypothezees is for zee fool.”

“Science is just as stupid as religion. Entropy is all there is,” **1** the Sequel winked at me.

In my rearview mirror was a fading scene of the pizza boy grabbing a brick and bashing the old man’s face into the ground. He looked like he was crying, the pizza boy that is. The old man probably didn’t even have functioning tear ducts at that point. The old lady wasn’t in view.

MARGARET AND THE INFESTATION

“But roaches aren’t attracted to water!” Veronica, the landlord, said in her nasal voice that made Margaret’s ears want to bleed.

“Every living thing on this planet is attracted to water,” Margaret said into the phone, as politely as possible as she clenched a wooden spoon in her fist and rolled her eyes.

“Don’t take that tone with me,” Veronica said, “I know you’re rolling your eyes!”

“We’re on a phone. Who cares if I’m rolling my eyes? All I want is for the leaking pipes underneath the kitchen sink to be fixed. That’s probably why the roaches keep coming back. They haven’t been back for a few days but let’s get this fixed as soon as possible.”

“Roaches aren’t attracted to water,” Veronica said again in her nasal self-assuredness.

“They’re called water bugs in some states, goddamnit. They’re attracted to water. Fix the fucking leak!” Margaret struck her thumb as hard as she could against the red button on her cell phone.

Billy, Margaret’s boyfriend, stayed the night and was just waking up. He yawned as he entered the kitchen and kissed her on the neck.

“I want to make pancakes,” he said. “I want to make pancakes right now.”

Margaret wanted pancakes but she feared at any moment the roach infestation would be back. She didn’t want to tell Billy about her battles with the landlord over them.

“Maybe we should just get Magnolia,” Margaret said.

“Fuck that. Why spend money when we have all the ingredients right here?” Billy opened the fridge and took out some eggs, milk, and Bisquik. A white puff of Bisquik pancake mix burst out of the plastic bag as he opened it.

“When I was a kid,” Billy said as he licked his pointer finger and dipped it into the mix, “I used to—” but his face went from nostalgic to

confusion and horror. Cockroaches climbed out of the bag and onto his hand and arm. He flailed and screamed and shook himself violently.

“Billy!” Margaret yelled, “Billy!”

It was no use. He was screaming and jumping and yelling his way out the door.

Margaret called the landlord.

“Come over right now and look at this infestation I’ve got going on here. They’re everywhere! This needs to be fixed today or I’m breaking the lease and suing your asses!” Margaret put as much anger as she could into her thumb and pressed the red button to hang up.

The pest control guy got to her apartment an hour later armed with all the tools that existed to kill roaches, probably.

“Howdy missus,” he said as he tipped his hat and smiled. He whistled and spit through the gaps in his teeth as he spoke. “We’s got some heavy ammo-nition at our disposal here. We’s gonna smoke ‘em out. Shock and awe these sumbitches and make sure they’s children never grow up to haunt yer packages of breakfast puddin’, knowmean? Now just set yer pretty face down, wear this here gas mask an’ wait fer the sufferin’ to begin.” He handed Margaret a gas mask and put on his own. “Name’s Charley the Cockroach Man,” he said and pointed to the hand drawn logo on his shirt. It said *Charley the Cockroach Man*.

“Are you a one man army?” Margaret asked.

“Heh-heh,” Charley the Cockroach Man giggled, “Now’s missus I’ve got a wife and children sitting all alone at home. It ain’t too impressive to be a one man cockroach bomb.”

He was right, it wasn’t impressive but Margaret was just making small talk.

“What sep’rates men from the cockroach,” Charley said as he sprayed purple chemicals in a fog that covered the entire apartment, “Is that men never give up on killings things they’s not too fond of. Heh-heh. You’s got one chemical, oh well, that shit din’t work so you move on to the next chemical. Oh shit, that din’t work too well either so you combine them two together and holy shit, you’s got some Hiroshimasaki firepower. This line of thinking, you see, applies to killing them roaches too!”

Margaret sat on her hands and nodded.

“You see,” Charley the Cockroach Man said as he put bait traps outfitted with blinking red LED lights in each corner of her apartment, “Cockroaches, sure, they’s adapt biologically like any other creature but men—shit, we’s adapting everyday with the nimble mind the Lord blessed our souls with. We make a weapon, use it in Vietnam, hippies don’t like it, fine. We adapt. We start to use it in our living rooms to kill roaches.”

“You’re not spraying napalm in my kitchen are you?” Margaret asked, a little worried.

“Napalm?! Ha! This here spraying machine has got the best of roach killing qualities! I am not at liberty to say what this contains but it is highly experimental and highly effective! They don’t call me the Cockroach Man because I’m stupid, you know!”

Up until that point, Margaret had subconsciously believed that anyone who called themselves or had been called a cockroach man was stupid.

Charley the Cockroach Man was scanning the walls with a remote control with an HD screen.

“I’ll be done in jus a second! Just checking up on my radar doohickey, makin’ fer damn sure these bugs is suffering.”

“They don’t need to suffer,” Margaret said. “They just need to die.”

“Sweetcakes,” Charley said, “The dead don’t learn nuthin’ lest they suffer!” Charley put the remote back in his pocket. “I’m all done! Don’t take off that mask on yer face for another few hours. This shit’ll tear your face off from the inside.”

Without a goodbye or a tip of his hat or anything, Charley the Cockroach Man walked out of the purple fog he had sprayed into Margaret’s apartment and closed the door behind him. Margaret pulled out her phone and called Billy but there was no answer. She got up to go to Magnolia by herself.

The next morning there was no scurrying. There was no battle between Margaret’s broom and the wall in a fruitless effort to kill roaches. They were completely gone.

“Wait a week,” Margaret said, not yet willing to buy into the

experimental la-di-da that Charley the Cockroach Man had put on pretty thick the day before. But weeks passed before she had any kind of disturbance from any kind of insect. They were definitely gone.

Margaret picked up her cell phone to call the landlord.

“Hello, this is Veronica Pasternak, landlord and general manager of Junglewod Properties. As you can tell, I am not in right now but please leave your name, number, and a brief message and I promise to get back to you as soon as I can.”

“Veronica! This is Margaret in apartment 256. You should call Charley the Cockroach Man every time someone has a complaint. They’re all gone. All of them!” Margaret was giddy. She was so giddy that she had decided to make it a night in for herself watching TV in her bedroom until she fell asleep. She had never been that comfortable in her place before. The TV lulled her to sleep.

She was awoken by a tickling on her legs. At first it was slow and sparse enough to be ignored but soon it felt as if whole armies were climbing her. She turned on her side light and watched as about twenty tiny bodies scattered like cockroaches.

But they weren’t roaches.

They giggled and screamed as they scattered. They walked on two legs. They were all bald and a pasty white. They were tiny little naked white men and they numbered at least ten times more than twenty.

Margaret couldn’t help but think, “What the fuck?” Who wouldn’t? She told herself she was dreaming and she tried to fall asleep with one eye open. Eventually she did.

The next night, she awoke to a tickling in her ears. One of the tiny little white men was hanging onto her earlobe, whispering into her ear. She screamed and grabbed it and threw it against the wall. It screamed the whole time it was in the air interrupted only by the thud of it hitting the wall. Margaret turned on the lights. A crowd of solemn tiny little naked white men were watching as their comrade smeared himself on the wall to the carpet. They were whispering and wailing and sobbing and when, finally, their comrade’s lifeless body hit the ground they turned to Margaret with hatred burning in their beady little eyes.

They climbed up her leg, biting and scratching, and calling her

names in a language she didn't understand.

She swatted at them and stomped on them and grabbed them by the handful to flush them down the toilet, but soon their screaming and pleading got to her. Roaches couldn't scream. What were these little feeling monsters? She called the landlord again.

It went to voicemail.

"Veronica! Whole new problem! Apartment 256! Little white men! Naked! They're like roaches!" Margaret hung up the phone and crawled into a corner so she could watch from every angle to protect herself.

They ran free around her house. They climbed bookshelves, swung from ceiling fans, caught rides on the cat and when they approached her she swatted them away, their screams be damned. These were little anarchists.

Margaret dialed the police.

"Sounds like you've got a weird roach problem. Why are you calling us?" they said and hung up.

Margaret dialed Billy.

"There's no fucking way I'm ever going to your house again," Billy said and hung up.

Margaret searched *Charley the Cockroach Man* and found a phone number. 24 hour service. Perfect.

"Yes'm, hello! You's reached me, Charley the Cockroach Man. How may I be of assistance?"

"Charley! It's Margaret. You came by my apartment a few weeks ago!"

"Oh, sweetcakes! I always 'member a voice after I done heard it once. Of course I remember you. What seems to be the issue? Roaches come crawling back? Them's sumbitches sometimes never learn."

"No!" Margaret yelled. "Little tiny naked white men."

"Oh, hell no," Charley said and hung up the phone.

Within five minutes he was knocking on the front door. The little tiny naked white men were prancing all around the house, completely unaware of the fate that lay ahead of them.

“Put on this mask, sweetcakes,” Charley said. “I can’t well kill ‘em but I can trap ‘em. They’s got full citizenship rights and shit.”

“Yeah, they screamed when I squashed them. I felt pretty bad.”

“Don’t feel too bad. These things is worse than roaches. Ruin everything they touch. Look at them two over there fuckin’ on your soup bowls. It’s a damn shame.”

Charley put on his own mask and sprayed some pink fog and all the tiny naked men fell asleep.

“If you step on a few of them, I won’t tell,” Charley smiled and nudged Margaret.

Margaret stomped and stomped. They were all asleep and when they couldn’t scream, it didn’t matter. She became happier and happier with each squishy sound.

“Aw, shit. You go on and have fun. You deserve it,” Charley the Cockroach Man said as he disappeared through the pink fog and shut the door behind him.



Andrew Hilbert lives in Austin, TX. His many projects include slagdrop.com, *The Weekly Weird Monthly* comic series, *Margaret and the Infestation: The Musical Variety Show*, as well as maintaining his own blog, *The Hilbert Heckler* (hilbertheckler.blogspot.com), where everything he is up to can be found easily.





Slagdrop Books
Austin, TX

www.slagdrop.com